

REMARKS

At the time of the Office Action dated May 20, 2003, claims 1-14 were pending. Of those claims, claims 1, 2 and 5 have been rejected and claims 3, 4 and 6-14 have been withdrawn from consideration pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.142(b).

In this amendment, Applicant has amended claim 1, canceled claim 2, and added new claims 15 and 16.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the modified limitation originally recited in claim 2. Adequate descriptive support for the amendment can be found in, for example, the first full paragraph at page 14 of the specification and Fig. 1C. Adequate descriptive support for new claim 15 can be found in, for example, the first full paragraph at page 21 of the specification and Figs. 4A-4B. Moreover, descriptive support for new claim 16 can be found, for example, at page 24, the last paragraph bridging pages 24 to 26 and in Figs. 4A and 4B. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter.

Applicant notes that the rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) has been rendered moot by cancellation of the claim. Applicant further notes that new claims 15 and 16 are within Applicant's election of species, i.e., Embodiment 5 of Figs. 4A and 4B.

In addition, the Office Action mentioned that "The information disclosure statement (IDS) filed on 08/19/02 has been considered by the examiner" in the third enumerated paragraph. Applicant notes that the IDS considered by the Examiner was filed on March 6, 2002. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to make a correction of record.

Claims 1, 2 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Utsumi et al.

In the statement of the rejection, the Examiner asserted that Utsumi et al. discloses a resin-encapsulated semiconductor device producing apparatus identically corresponding to what is claimed.

In response to the rejection, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the following limitations:

the mold has inner-wall surfaces which defines a shape of the main cavity, the inner-wall surfaces including a first surface onto which the external-shape regulating member is placed, and a second surface adjacent to the first surface having an angle of more than 90 degrees relative to the first surface, and

the external-shape regulating member has a third surface facing the first surface and fourth surface facing the second surface, the fourth surface having an angle of more than 90 degrees relative to the third surface, the angle of the fourth surface being substantially the same as that of the second surface relative to the first surface.

Applicant submits that Utsumi et al. does not disclose the above limitations added to claim 1. As shown in Figs. 1(a)-1(c), Utsumi et al. discloses a mold unit 31 with a cavity 31c in which a removable block 32 is accommodated. The removable block 32 has a rectangular shape in cross section, i.e., one of its faces does not have an angle of more than 90 degrees relative to its adjacent surface. On the other hand, the external-shape regulating member of the claimed invention has such structure as disclosed by the above limitations. Therefore, there are significant differences between the claimed invention and a resin-encapsulated semiconductor device producing apparatus disclosed by Utsumi et al. that defeat the factual determination that Utsumi et al. identically describes the claimed invention within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §102.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal of the imposed rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for lack of novelty as evidenced by Utsumi et al.

Dependent claim 5.

A dependent claim is not anticipated if the independent claim upon which it depends is allowable because all the limitations of the independent claim are contained in the dependent claim. Therefore, claim 5 is patentable because it includes all the limitations of independent claim 1, despite the Examiner's additional comments with respect to claim 5. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of the claim and solicits withdrawal thereof.

New claims 15 and 16.

Applicant has added new claim 15 claiming the structure to hold the external-shape regulating member by using suction force. Utsumi et al. discloses, for example, that the removable block 34A is fixed to an upper ejector plate 33 through an ejector pin 34B (see Fig. 1(a)), but does not disclose the using of suction force. In addition, new claim 15 is dependent claim of claim 1, which includes all the limitations of independent claim 1.

New claim 16 recites "a supporting regulating member detachably accommodated in the main cavity of the mold, for forming the new cavity, cooperating with the external-shape regulation member." Although Utsumi et al. discloses the removal block 32 (discussed above), it does not disclose any other block cooperating with the removal block 32.

Accordingly, new claims 15 and 16 are in condition for allowance and Applicant respectfully solicits favorable consideration of the new claims.

Conclusion

Accordingly, it is urged that the application, as now amended, is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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